



Finding Hope after DIVORCE

Name Withheld

Could I let go of my fears and turn my life over to the Lord?

It was nearly impossible for me to comprehend what was happening when my temple marriage of 27 years crumbled. I was devastated and disillusioned. When the dust finally settled, I was left alone, responsible financially for our youngest three children—a son on a mission and two daughters still at home.

It happened so quickly that I often felt like shouting, “How could this have happened to us?” But it *had* happened, and I had no choice but to move on. I struggled with sorrow and bitterness. But most of all, with a paralyzing fear that gripped me, I didn’t know what to do next. I had devoted the past 26 years to raising our six children. The thought of reentering the workforce was overwhelming.

Grieving and Learning

My bishop recommended counseling through LDS Family Services. I was ready to try anything that might lessen my pain and help me move through the grieving process. The counseling sessions were a remarkable learning and soul-stretching experience. I soaked up any information that would help me.

I learned many things during this excruciating time. The scriptures, prayer, my journal, and the temple became my primary links to daily strength. What changed my life, however, was learning to turn my fears over to the Lord. I learned that faith and fear cannot coexist in our minds. Fear inhibits faith and crowds our minds with worry so we cannot hear the Spirit. Fear needs to give way to faith

in order for us to access the Lord's guidance and comfort. This was a huge realization for me. Worry consumes the present, crowding out all positive, inspired thought. Could I let go of the worry and turn my life over to the Lord? I knew I couldn't do it alone, but I also knew the Lord would help.

Courage to Move Forward

I remember praying with all of my heart for the Lord to take away my fear and replace it with faith. I poured out my soul, telling Heavenly Father I didn't know which way to turn but that I knew He did. The pain and anger and fear were too great for me to bear alone. I asked Him to help me work through it to the point of understanding and forgiveness.

I thought of the scripture in Matthew 11:29–30: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." I clung to the hope that this was possible. I wept and offered a heartfelt plea to Heavenly Father to help me through this difficult time in my life, and I promised to live as close to the Spirit as I could so I would be worthy of His guidance and wisdom. My prayer ended with a promise to help lift others as He lifted me.

That prayer was a turning point for me. I felt that my burden *did* become lighter, and I began to feel a deep sense of peace and well-being. I felt as if the sun had burst through the clouds after a long, dark storm. Comfort in the knowledge that the Lord knew me eased my intense pain and feelings of betrayal and anguish. The Lord knew of my dashed hopes, my fears, and my trials. He heard my prayers and answered them. This gave me the courage to make decisions, to square my shoulders, and to move forward.

Focusing on the Savior

Nevertheless, there have been times since then when I have lost my focus and the fear or bitterness would creep back in. Sorrow was never very far away. I learned that I needed to feel those emotions in order to move through

the grieving process. When the burden settled back on my shoulders, I would often think of Peter trying to walk on the water toward the Savior. As long as Peter focused on the Savior, he was able to move forward, but when he looked at the wind and the stormy waters, he began to sink. (See Matthew 14:22–33.) I needed to focus on the Savior and not look at the crashing waves all around me. It was a constant effort, requiring me to pray always and exert all my faith, but it paid off. I began to make difficult

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decisions, liquidating property, obtaining employment, settling taxes, and caring for the children. As I focused one day at a time on the Lord's will in my life, I received spiritual guidance.

Now I look back with amazement and gratitude at the Lord's guidance and comfort so graciously bestowed on me. The anger and bitterness are gone. I feel daily peace and joy and know deep within me of the Lord's love and concern. I learned firsthand what the term "refiner's fire" means. The process of heating gold so that the impurities run off, leaving only that which is of lasting worth, parallels what has been happening in my life. I do not like the heat, but learning to let go of the impurities has been worth the results—more deeply ingrained faith, understanding, and gratitude.

I have come to know that as we trust in the Lord with all our hearts, lean not on our own understanding, and in all our ways acknowledge Him, He *will* direct our paths (see Proverbs 3:5–6). ■